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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 005220

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MASS](#) [PINS](#) [IZ](#) [FR](#)

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON FRENCH TRAINING OFFERS FOR IRAQ,
RECOVERY OF FROZEN IRAQI ASSETS

REF: A. BAGHDAD 2859

[1](#)B. PARIS 4043 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt, reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary and comment: The French have begun contributing to the EU "JUSTLEX" program, with 40 Iraqi police officers now in France for a one-month rule of law training program, the first tranche of a group of 175 slated to receive such training. MFA contacts report less progress, however, on a separate French offer to train Iraqi security forces at gendarme academies in France, and described the mid-July visit to France by an Iraqi MOI delegation as inconclusive. Although MFA contacts blame the Iraqi side for the lack of progress on the bilateral training offer, it appears that the GoF could do more to tailor its offer to Iraqi needs, and that the GoF was not receptive to having higher-level representation in the Iraqi MOI delegation which visited France earlier this month. MFA contacts also stress that the GoF is seeking to resolve the long-standing issue of 10 million USD in former regime assets frozen by the GoF, and hope for a legislative fix to the issue by year-end. Despite GoF efforts to advance its modest assistance offers and resolve the frozen assets issue, MFA contacts report deepening GoF pessimism on Iraq, with alarmist reporting from the French embassy in Baghdad on secession prospects, and President Chirac reportedly more convinced than ever that "he was right" on Iraq, amid a deepening malaise on the French domestic front. End summary and comment.

[1](#)2. (C) MFA desk officer for Iraq Renaud Salins updated poloff July 26 and 27 on the status of French offers to train Iraqi security forces in France. Salins confirmed that in early July, 40 Iraqi police officers began month-long training at gendarme schools in Lyon and Fontainebleau under the EU "JUSTLEX" rule of law program, making France the leading EU contributor to the program. Salins said that the GoF would continue to train Iraqi police in tranches of about 40 under the JUSTLEX program, towards a target of 175 trained officers. He added that the GoF was remaining discreet on the presence of the Iraqi officers in France and had turned down media requests to interview the group, out of concerns for the trainees' security and that of the French embassy in Baghdad. Poloff, in response, questioned the threat facing the Iraqi trainees in France and stressed the importance of the GoF showing publicly its support for Iraq's stabilization.

[1](#)3. (C) Salins reported less progress on the long-stalled French bilateral offer to train a much larger group (up to 1500) of Iraqi security forces in France, and blamed ITG indecisiveness and disorganization for the impasse. Salins confirmed that a three-person Iraqi MOI delegation visited France in mid-July and received two days of detailed briefings from French MOD officials on the range of short-term gendarme training options in France. Salins went on at length about the logistical difficulties and delays in bringing the Iraqi delegation to Paris, and noted that the COL-level Iraqi delegation did not include Minister of State for National Security Abdul Kareem Al An'zi, who unsuccessfully sought to join the group at the last minute. Salins conceded that the GoF had not been receptive to An'zi's joining the delegation, as it had sought to keep the briefings at the technical level and wanted to avoid last-minute changes; the GoF expected that An'zi would visit France some time in the fall. Although the Iraqi delegation, according to Salins, had failed to present a shortlist of training priorities at the July meetings, some progress had been made in narrowing down possibilities, with the Iraqi side expressing a preference for CT, document fraud detection, and judicial police training, as opposed to basic training. The eventual solution might be a "train the trainer" program, with small numbers of Iraqi officers receiving technical training in France and then training counterparts back home. Asked why France was able to implement the JUSTLEX program so quickly in comparison to the bilateral offer, Salins cited the narrower scope of the EU program (rule of law) and conceded that the European Commission had been more effective in securing buy-in from the ITG. When asked whether the GoF bilateral offer would cover travel and per diem expenses for Iraqi trainees (ref a), Salins conceded that the GoF had not yet offered to cover these costs, but he speculated that the GoF would eventually agree to cover per diem and lodging, and perhaps leave the

travel costs to the Iraqi side.

14. (C) Salins also stressed that the MFA was seeking to resolve the issue of the 10 million USD in former regime Iraqi assets frozen by the GoF. He repeated longstanding GOF explanations for the delayed assets transfer, noting that the GoF needed new legislation to overcome domestic legal protections, dating back to the post-WWII period, intended to prevent unlawful government seizure of private property. Salins clarified that any assets or property held in the name of the former Iraqi regime had already been transferred to the ITG; what was at issue was assets and property held in the name of former regime figures and their families, or front companies linked to the former regime. Salins reported that a meeting on the frozen assets issue had taken place July 26 between the MFA, Ministry of Finance, and Iraqi Ambassador to France; at that meeting, the Finance Ministry reported that it was working with the Ministry of Justice to finalize draft legislation to permit the frozen asset transfers, with the aim of achieving adoption of the new law before the end of 2005.

15. (C) In closing, Salins (protect), who departs soon for Washington to take up responsibilities as the French embassy NEA watcher, offered unusually candid comments on deepening GoF pessimism on Iraq, despite having turned the page with Washington and efforts to implement the GoF's modest assistance offers. Salins described increasing sentiment within the GoF that Iraq is entering an irreversible downward spiral, in the face of increasing insurgent violence and sectarian divisions. He cited alarmist reporting from French ambassador to Iraq Bajolet, whose discussions with Kurdish and Shi'a party leaders suggested growing separationist trends on both sides, with the issue of Sunni inclusion being overtaken by the larger question of whether the country can hold together. Poloff cautioned against doomsday scenarios, stressed the continued progress in the political process, cooperation among Iraq's leading political factions in the face of insurgent violence, and our shared interest in promoting a free and stable Iraq, which the French training offer would serve to promote. Salins accepted the point, but concluded that President Chirac remained resolute in his conviction that "he was right" on Iraq; in the face of France's ongoing domestic crisis and with Chirac's diminished domestic and international credibility, it was perhaps all Chirac had left.

STAPLETON